



Military and Political

Presuming that we have by now established that we are not pacifists, but are revolutionaries who intend, by any means necessary, to assist the working class to expropriate the expropriator bourgeois class - which by itself, whether with bloodshed or not, is a violent act: Then why can we not move with speed, and without any restraint, towards an armed overthrow of the oppressors?

The late William "Bill" Pomeroy started his essay "On the Time for Armed Struggle" (linked below) from the same point of departure, in the following words:

"Because of the decisive results that can follow from an armed smashing of the main instruments of power held by a ruling class or a foreign oppressor, some of those who acquire a revolutionary outlook are eager to move to the stage of armed struggle; and their concept of it as the highest form of revolutionary struggle causes them to cast discredit upon other forms as 'less advanced', as amounting

to collaboration with or capitulation to the class enemy.”

But, he wrote:

“Too often the aura of glory associated with taking up arms has obscured hard prosaic truths and realities in the interplay of forces in a period of sharp struggle.”

And later on, Pomeroy adds:

“The experiences of the revolutionary movement in the Philippines offer an interesting example of the complex, varied and fluctuating processes that may occur in a liberation struggle.”

Pomeroy writes that *“analysis and understanding of the revolutionary experiences of others is indispensable”*. He proceeds to offer his own rich and extraordinary experience as a military combatant and revolutionary. His main lesson is that the military must never think that it can cease to be subordinate to the political. Such thinking is bound to bring disaster, as it did in the Philippines.

Not only is the military subordinate to the political - in the hierarchical sense that the military takes its orders from the political leadership and reports back to it. It is more than that. The revolutionary movement must proceed away from military, and towards political, essentially peaceful means.

Far from armed struggle being the “highest form”, it is a form of

struggle that we do not adopt unless it is forced upon us, and we pursue it, if we have to, with the main aim of returning as quickly as possible to political means.

This is not only a revolutionary *political* principle. It is also, in terms of the best military theory (that of Clausewitz) a *military* principle, namely that force of arms can only serve to return the parties to the negotiating table. That is all it can do; and if it fails to do this much, then military force is simply a disaster.

The picture shows William and Celia Pomeroy, next to a newspaper report about their incarceration in the course of the Philippines struggle. William Pomeroy passed away on 12 January 2009 and Celia Pomeroy passed away on 22 August 2009.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [On the Time for Armed Struggle, 1974, Pomeroy](#).
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